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ABSTRACT

This article describes a project conducted by an elementary school district in Illinois, in which public school personnel played a major role in the development of prospective teachers by designing training procedures with direct applicability to classrooms within the local schools. More emphasis was placed on classroom experience for the prospective teachers than on actual coursework. Twenty-two people with baccalaureate degrees who had not previously taken any education courses were selected to participate in the program. Courses necessary for state teacher certification were offered on an extension basis at the project site. This college preparation sequence was combined with opportunities for extensive clinical experiences throughout the school year. Phase I combined classroom experience with courses in educational psychology and the history and philosophy of education as well as with supplemental instruction in such areas as classroom management, individual differences and personal and affective awareness. Additional clinical experience, in-service training, and three methodology courses comprised Phase II. Student teaching concluded the program. (DDO)

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Toward Increased Involvement of Public Schools in Teacher Preparation Programs

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Many models for training programs to prepare teachers exist, with varying degrees of useful or creative solutions to continuing problems. Most models for training programs are based in a college or university setting with cooperative arrangements with local districts for the placement of students for clinical experiences and "practice teaching." Few programs fully utilize the public schools as a natural and practical site for a teacher training program. This article discusses a project conducted by an elementary school district,[1] in which public school personnel contributed a major role in the development of prospective teachers by designing training procedures with direct applicability to classrooms within the local schools.

The project, supplemented by funding from Title III, Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and Title B-2, Education Professions Development Act, was designed to lessen the effects of criticisms frequently voiced regarding college or university teacher preparation programs often guilty of such practices as: 1) inability and desire to provide sufficient opportunities for prospective teachers to observe or perform in public schools prior to their student teaching assignments; 2) inability and desire to provide for students taking methods courses to apply learned techniques immediately in real classroom situations and with "live" students; and 3) inability and desire to offer students the breadth or variety of experiences which would make them aware of the realities or problems of teaching prior to employment.

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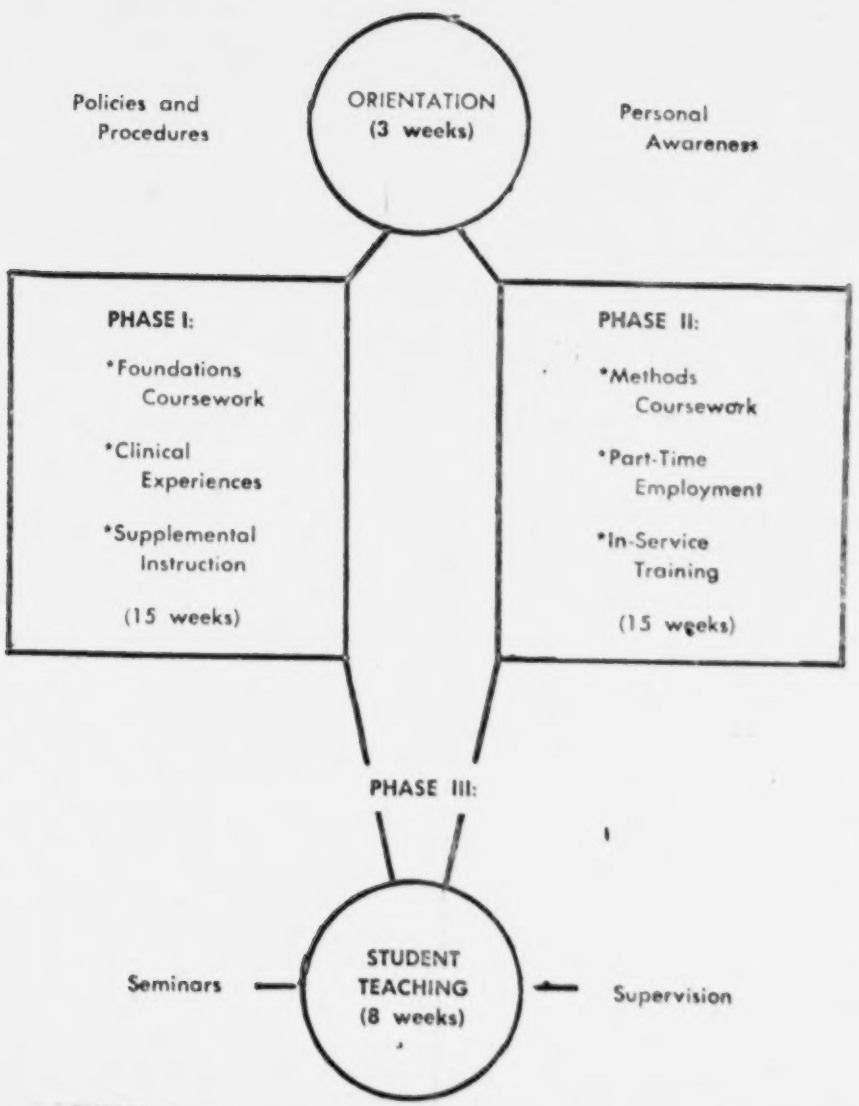
Twenty-two participants, identified as "Teacher Associates" ("associates"), were selected from the north shore area of Chicago to receive training during an entire school year. Those accepted in the project had baccalaureate degrees, but lacked previous education coursework, and were interested in teaching and fulfilling requirements for state teacher certification by earning college credits through extension courses offered at the project site. This college preparation sequence was combined with opportunities for extensive clinical experiences throughout the entire school year under the direction of "model" teachers with supervision from administrators, local resource persons, and university consultants.

The program model, represented by Figure 1, was designed to implement the following objectives:

1. To prepare participants to identify the needs and interest of pupils and to select materials and strategies to help students achieve educational objectives.
2. To prepare participants to use a variety of skills and techniques to make lesson plans interesting and to use innovative and creative teaching procedures.
3. To prepare participants to utilize assistance offered by resource persons on an as-needed basis in areas of content, methodology, materials, and evaluation.
4. To prepare participants to commit themselves to the educational profession by interacting with professional colleagues in areas of mutual interest.
5. To prepare participants to evaluate their own teaching competancy and effectiveness.

FIGURE 1: Program Model



In implementing the strategies developed for this project, several cooperative arrangements were made. The school district administered the project and assumed responsibility for activities occurring during orientation and Phase I. Project staff were involved in administrative services, supervision and supplemental instruction. Northeastern Illinois State College, Chicago, Illinois, provided instructors and offered credit for the 21 hours of "professional education" coursework. Cooperating districts, located near the training center, were involved in selection procedures and shared in providing employment for the "associates" in Phase II as well as placing "associates" with cooperating teachers during the student teaching assignment.

The school related activities for project participants during Phase I were referred to as "clinical experiences." "Associates" were randomly assigned to five buildings in the district with the size of each school determining the number of associates assigned. Each principal was asked to find experienced teachers who would be willing to act as an "advisor" and to establish teams with which each "associate" would be involved. This plan had been recommended by a Teacher Advisory Group which had met for three days in the summer to develop guidelines in using "associates" in the schools over a fourteen week period of five half days each week.

Advisors provided trainees with a home base within the schools and directed and coordinated the activities of the associates by planning a general program of observation, preparing the class for the role the "associate" was to perform, and planning meeting times for discussions about progress or needs for new and different experiences. A "team" concept was implemented by having teachers at different grade levels or other staff personnel available to work with the "associates." The principal was an "ex-officio" member of each team within the school. Regular reports were submitted to inform the building principal of team plans and the clinical experiences of "associates."

After the "associate" became knowledgeable about general school routine, the team conferred to plan a weekly schedule for the "associate." Each team planned experiences with the dual goals of:

1. Providing experiences for the associate at different grade levels.
2. Using the services of the associate to provide assistance in the class.

Along with the clinical experiences offered in Phase I, "associates" spent three half days per week in courses; i.e., Educational Psychology, History and Philosophy of Education, along with two half days of "seminar" activities with project staff.

Cooperating school districts played a vital role in increasing the variety of experiences to which "associate" teachers were exposed. The three involved districts, along with the "home", developed plans to employ and utilize trainees at least two full days per week within their schools. During this part-time employment period, a variety of activities were accomplished:

1. A heavy emphasis was placed on providing enrichment activities for all students utilizing learning centers, special equipment, and innovative programs.
2. A continued effort was made to provide tutorial arrangements for under-achieving students.
3. Special assignments were available to work with resource persons in special areas such as library, guidance, speech, and learning disabilities.
4. District teachers were released for curriculum planning, micro-teaching techniques, and visitations.

During this second phase, "associates" also took the three methods courses of reading, arithmetic, and language arts, which consumed three half days per week. Two other half days were spent in gaining additional "clinical settings," with the remaining half days devoted to in-service training activities.

With the exposure that the "associate" group received in actual classroom

experiences, these prospective teachers were ready and eager to assume student teaching assignments in the four districts during the final eight week period of the program.

Training took two routes -- coursework, as presented by Northeastern Illinois State College staff for professional education credit and supplemental instruction, provided by project staff or invited guests. The college coursework was the minimal amount needed in "professional education" to gain a standard teaching certificate in Illinois. Although supplemental instruction was not given for credit, the information contained in these seminar periods had direct relevance for teaching.

Coursework (21 hours)	Supplemental Instruction
Educational Psychology	Classroom Management
History of Education	Individual Differences
Philosophy of Education	Guidance Orientation
Methods in: Reading	Affective Awareness
Arithmetic	
Language Arts	Personal Awareness
Student teaching	Self Assessment
	Micro-Teaching

The major focus of the work leading to college credit was to prepare the prospective teacher to assume the responsibility of working in the cognitive domain -- providing students with content. Supplemental instruction emphasized the affective domain -- preparing students to be content. The teachers trained in the Deerfield Project had a unique blending of these two critical components of the teaching process. A unique aspect of the Teacher Associate Program has been the emphasis on helping the teacher become aware of the affective development of children.

The following points were stated as being critical to teacher preparation which were implemented by the project staff in their work with teacher associates:

1. To be cognizant of the influence of affective feelings and concerns effecting learning -- those feelings of both students and teachers.
2. To improve teacher effectiveness by utilizing such skills as praise, encouragement, positive reinforcement, etc.
3. To insure that when the "climate" of the classroom is one of mutual trust, warmth, tolerance, flexibility, etc., the greatest potential for learning is available.
4. To create an awareness regarding the behavior of the teacher as being the cause and effect which ultimately influences the behavior of students.
5. To realize that the ability to respond to and understand the affective components of student behavior and its importance and relatedness to learning is the most significant factor related to successful teacher performance.

The procedures used by project staff in assisting trainees to develop these kinds of abilities were accomplished in the following ways:

1. Seminar settings focusing on the use of standardized tests and their meaning as applied to classroom analysis.
2. Guest lecturers emphasizing individual differences in the context of special education classes or learning disability programs, speech health, and guidance resources.
3. Procedures to deal with problem solving in the classroom, assessment of teaching behavior, and activities focusing on specific skills in teaching.
4. Follow-up conferences in schools with trainees to discuss their experiences and to reinforce their successes.
5. Opportunities to visit different schools and educational practices and to make comparisons between their own situation and others.
6. Time to discuss the kinds of exposure that different associates were having

in their schools and comparing and contrasting different teaching styles.

This entire instructional plan, independent of the coursework provided by NISC, capitalized on the unique involvement of teacher associates in real classes with live students and typical school environments. This approach to instruction was complemented by the kinds of teachers with whom the associates were working, who provided excellent exposure and activities in the classroom setting. Consequently, the real value of this program was found in the ideal situation which allowed a person in training to have: 1) academic preparation in fulfilling requirements for certification as provided by an accredited institution; 2) practical instruction in critical areas generally overlooked in regular preparation sequences as provided by local personnel functioning on the "firing line;" and 3) total exposure to a natural laboratory setting in which experimentation can occur to test out "theory" and get immediate feedback from meaningful sources; i.e., teachers, students.

A program capable of blending together each of these viable and necessary components appears to be quite different from the traditional approaches followed by many colleges and universities. With the realization that such a program was developed and implemented by personnel within the public schools, it ought to be possible to adapt such a program to a variety of settings in several different locations. Such a procedure needs to be encouraged so that future teachers will have greater numbers of relevant experiences in public schools and greater opportunities to assess their abilities in their chosen profession.